

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCUSAREUR IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 287457

EXDIS, MIL ADDEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE, FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING REPEAT USBERLIN 2503 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
AMEMBASSY BERLIN BONN MOSCOW USNATO NOV 23.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 2503

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS CINCUSAREUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PGOV, WB, PFOR, GE, UR, US

SUBJECT: SUSPECTED EXFILTRATION BY US FORCES MEMBER

1. SUMMARY: DURING EVENING NOV. 21 US ARMY STAFF
SERGEANT PROBABLY ENGAGED IN EXFILTRATION FORCIBLY EVADED
SEARCH OF HIS VEHICLE AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE.
FLIGHT CAUSED CONSIDERABLE COMMOTION
AT CHECKPOINT WHICH INVOLVED BRITISH MILITARY POLICE
AND GERMAN CUSTOMS POLICE AS WELL. INCIDENT WAS
PROBABLY OBSERVED BY EAST GERMANS AND MAY EVENTUALLY
SURFACE IN WEST BERLIN PRESS. WE HAVE DRAFTED A CON-
TINGENCY STATEMENT FOR USE WITH RUSSIANS HERE, SHOULD
THEY RAISE MATTER. END SUMMARY.

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2. AT ABOUT 2220 LOCAL TIME NOV 21 A US ARMY STAFF SERGEANT

ROSCOE JOHNSON RETURNED FROM EAST BERLIN IN HIS 1969 PONTIAC AND WAS DIRECTED BY MILITARY POLICE INTO THE NEARBY SECLUDED PARKING LOT FOR THE ROUTINE SEARCH REQUIRED OF US VEHICLES EXITING EAST BERLIN. DURING THE SEARCH, MP'S NOTICED TRUNK HAD FALSE BACK AND THAT BEHIND THIS PARTITION THERE WAS PIECE OF CLOTH THAT MOVED AS IF THERE WAS PERSON BREATHING. MP PUT FINGER INTO SMALL HOLE OF FALSE BACK AND OBJECT ON OTHER SIDE MOVED. JOHNSON THEN SUDDENLY JUMPED IN HIS VEHICLE AND BEGAN BACKING IT OUT OF PARKING LOT. TWO MP'S BY THIS TIME REINFORCED BY THEIR NCOIC, AND TWO BRITISH MILITARY POLICEMEN IN A LAND ROVER ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK JOHNSON'S ESCAPE. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE COMMOTION IN CHECKPOINT AREA AS FOUR OR FIVE INDIVIDUALS SHOUTED AT JOHNSON TO STOP AND JOHNSON ACCELERATED AT HIGH SPEED AWAY FROM CHECKPOINT WITH TRUNK OPEN. DURING ESCAPE HE ALMOST RAN DOWN BRITISH CORPORAL WHO ATTEMPTED TO BLOCK GETAWAY. BRITISH MILITARY POLICE LAND ROVER GAVE CHASE BUT LOST JOHNSON'S HIGH - POWERED CAR AFTER FIVE MINUTES.

3. JOHNSON WAS SUBSEQUENTLY PICKED UP BY US MILITARY POLICE PATROL ABOUT 30 MINUTES LATER. SEARCH OF VEHICLE REVEALED A COMPARTMENT BETWEEN TRUNK PARTITION AND BACK SEAT WHICH WAS LARGE ENOUGH FOR SEVERAL SUITCASES OF SMUGGLED GOODS OR TWO ADULTS. THERE WERE NO OCCUPANTS OF THE COMPARTMENT, BUT A NUMBER OF ITEMS OF WOMEN'S CLOTHING WERE FOUND. CONSEQUENTLY, WE DO NOT NOW HAVE PROOF OF WHAT KIND OF CONTRABAND JOHNSON WAS CARRYING. MARIENFELDE REFUGEE CENTER (US-RUN) IS ON LOOKOUT FOR POSSIBLE EXFILTRATEES. ONE EAST GERMAN FEMALE ESCAPEE HAS SINCE ARRIVED AT THE MARIENFELDE REFUGEE CENTER, BUT SHE MAINTAINS THAT SHE ENTERED WEST BERLIN AT ANOTHER POINT.

4. SO FAR JOHNSON IS REFUSING TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT WHATSOEVER. HE CAN, HOWEVER, BE PUNISHED AND PROMPTLY REMOVED FROM BERLIN ON THE BASIS OF FAILING TO OBEY A LAWFUL ORDER, DISOBEDIENCE OF REGULATIONS, ASSAULT WITH A VEHICLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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SPEEDING, RUNNING A RED LIGHT AND MISCELLANEOUS OTHER CHARGES.

5. COMMOTION AT CHECKPOINT CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF GERMAN CUSTOMS POLICE WHO MADE A REPORT BUT WHO ARE PROBABLY NOT AWARE OF WHAT TRIGGERED INCIDENT. IT HAS BEEN OUR EXPERIENCE THAT GERMAN POLICE REPORTS EVENTUALLY COME TO THE BERLIN PRESS, SOME OF WHICH ARE

NOTORIOUSLY INDIFFERENT TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF PUBLISHING SUCH INFORMATION.

6. IN ADDITION, EAST GERMAN GUARDS PROBABLY NOTED THE DISTURBANCE FROM WATCHTOWER ON EASTERN SIDE. WE MAY THUS SOON HAVE TO FIELD A SOVIET PROTEST ON THIS INCIDENT.

7. IF THE SOVIETS RAISE THE MATTER WITH US, WE WOULD TAKE THE FOLLOWING LINE:

(A) BEGIN TEXT. IF YOU ARE REFERRING TO AN EPISODE INVOLVING A US SOLDIER IN THE LATE EVENING OF NOVEMBER 21 AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE, IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT A DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN ALLIED SERVICEMEN TOOK PLACE AND LED TO A SCENE IN THE AMERICAN SECTOR. THIS IS AN INTERNAL US MATTER, WHICH IS BEING INVESTIGATED. END TEXT.

(B) IF APPROPRIATE, WE MIGHT ADD: BEGIN TEXT. FOR YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION, THE US SOLDIER IS BEING DISCIPLINED FOR DISOBEDIENCE OF ORDERS, ATTEMPTED EVASION OF PROCESSING , AND RECKLESS DRIVING. END TEXT.

8. THERE REMAINS A POSSIBILITY THAT THE PRESS WILL LEARN OF THE MATTER IN SUCH DETAIL AS TO BE ABLE TO ASSERT THAT AN EXFILTRATION TOOK PLACE. THIS WOULD BE MOST DISAGREEABLE, COMING UPON THE RECENT AND STILL OUTSTANDING SOVIET/EAST GERMAN COMPLAINT THAT A DEFECTOR SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPED IN A US UNIFORM.

(A) IF AN ACCUSATION OF THIS SERIOUSNESS IS MADE, WE WOULD RESPOND WITH SELECTIVE PORTIONS OF OUR STANDARD REPLY DELIVERED BY ARMITAGE TO COUNSELOR ILIN ON DECEMBER 10, 1974 ON EXFILTRATION (STATE 256998, NOVEMBER 21, 1974), I.E. BEGIN TEXT: AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY STATED TO YOU, US REGULATIONS DO NOT PERMIT UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS TO ENTER OR DEPART THE SOVIET CONFIDENTIAL

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SECTOR OF BERLIN IN VEHICLES OF THE US FORCES. YOU ARE ASSURED THAT ALL MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO PREVENT VIOLATIONS OF THESE REGULATIONS, AND THAT APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ARE APPLIED WHEN THE USG LEARNS OF SUCH VIOLATIONS. WE DO NOT CONDONE CONTRAVENTION OF THESE REGULATIONS. END TEXT.

(B) IF CALLED FOR, WE WOULD ADD CAVEATS REPEATING OUR RIGHTS OF FREE ACCESS TO EAST BERLIN AND OUR POSITION ON THE STATUS OF EAST BERLIN.

9. WE DOUBT IF SOVIETS WOULD RAISE THIS MATTER AT HIGHER LEVEL THAN BERLIN INITIALLY, IN SPITE OF FACT THAT EXFILTRATION WAS ONCE DISCUSSED IN CAPITALS.

10. USCOB CONCURS. GEORGE

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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NNN

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